



HAPPY HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS



A STREET IN NAPLES.

51

HAPPY HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

BY

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NEW YORK

FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

(Printed in Great Britain)

2/2222

GT171
.M4

Gift
Publisher
AN 1523



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HAPPY HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

CHAPTER I

STRANGE HOMES IN EUROPE

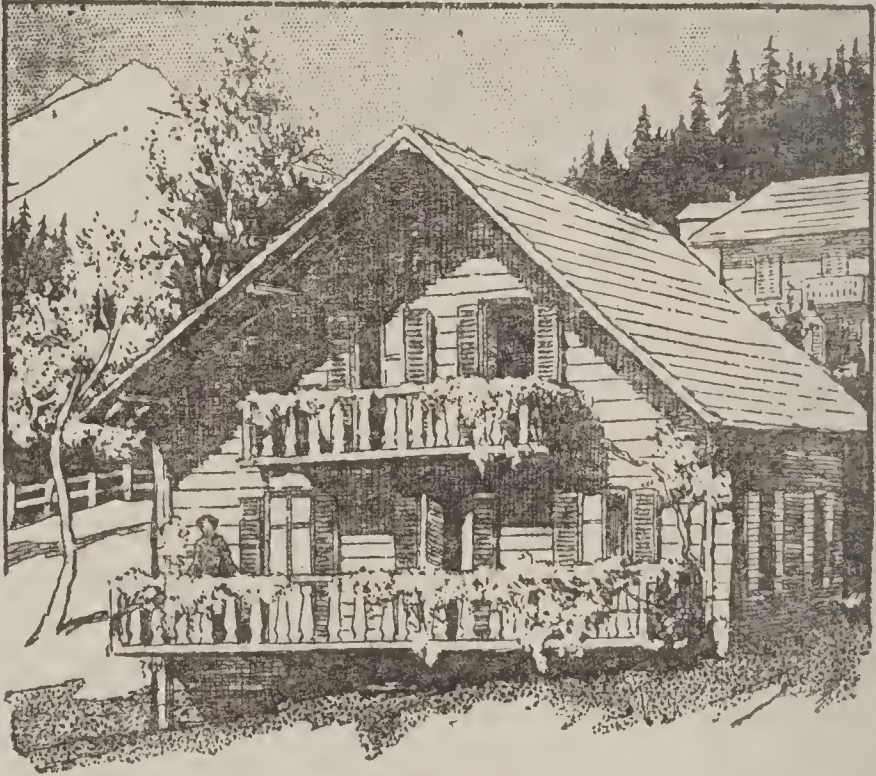
“**T**HERE’S no place like Home.” We all know the words of the old song, and, although of course every English child believes that his own home is the nicest and prettiest in the whole world, it will perhaps be interesting to think a little about the strange dwellings where little boys and girls live in other lands.

We will begin with Europe, as that is the nearest continent to England, and leaving behind us France and Germany, travel to Switzerland, which, with its snow-capped mountains, rocky valleys, and rushing streams, is one of the most beautiful countries in the world.

The homes of the Swiss peasants are called *châlets*, and with their steep roofs and wide,

flower-filled balconies, they are very picturesque and well suited to their wonderful surroundings.

Indeed, so new and spick-and-span are many of these little wooden houses, that they look as if



SWISS CHÂLET.

they had just been taken out of boxes and unwrapped from their tissue-paper, like the toy chalets which we can buy in the shops of all Swiss towns.

At first sight these dainty cottages hardly seem

suited to the storms and frosts of a Swiss winter, but in reality they are very strongly built. The snow slips easily from the high-pitched roof, its wide overhanging eaves make useful shelters on either side for great piles of firewood, and large stoves keep the rooms inside warm and cosy.

Often in winter-time the snow is so deep that the ground floor is completely buried, and then the family live on the upper story. This can be reached by an outside staircase which runs up to the wooden balcony.

Large stones are always seen on the roof of a *châlet*, and these are put there to make it heavy, so that it may not be blown away when a strong wind sweeps down from the mountains.

In the summer many of the Swiss peasants leave their homes and go up into the hills, where there are beautiful fields of grass, which are called "Alps." Here they live for several months in rough wooden huts, and spend their time in looking after the cattle and making the milk into cheese.

Although the great mountains of Switzerland, with their snow-covered peaks and wonderful

4 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

glaciers, are very beautiful, they are dangerous neighbours, for masses of snow, or avalanches, often become loosened by the heat of the sun, and sweep down into the valleys, crashing through

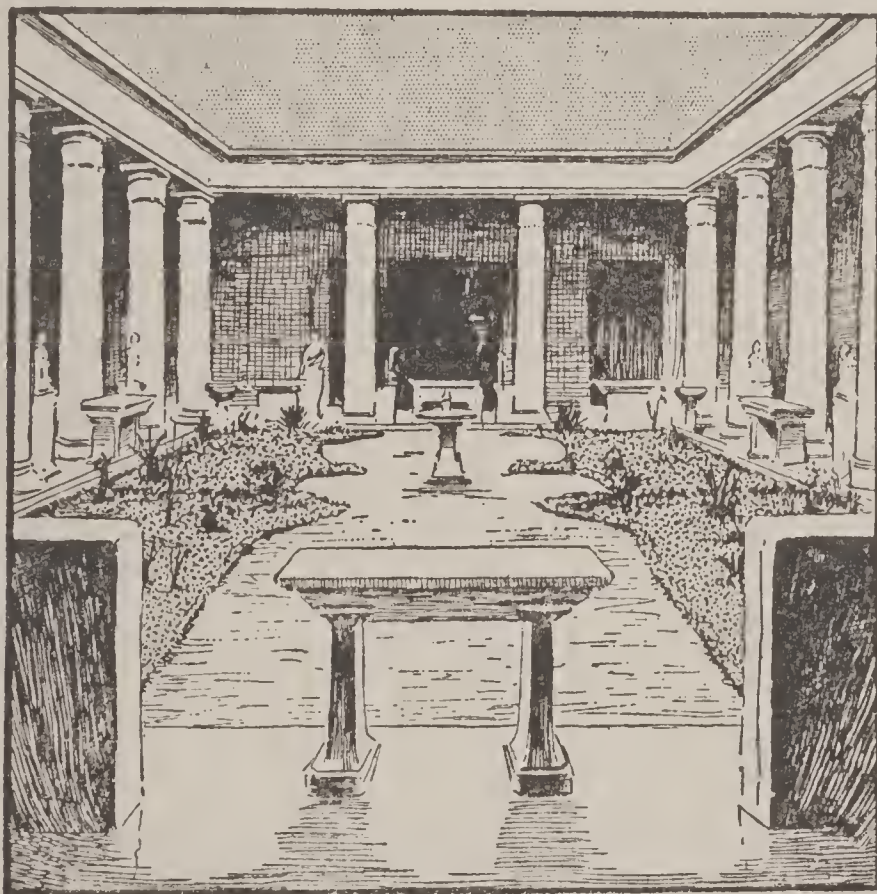


SWISS MOUNTAIN HUT.

forests and burying houses or even whole villages. At other times landslips occur, when part of the mountain-side itself will slide downward, carrying everything before it.

We must now leave Switzerland, with its beau-

ties and its dangers, and go south into Italy, travelling across mountain passes, through cities, and along the shores of lakes, until at last we come to Naples. This place also has a dangerous moun-



ANCIENT HOUSE IN POMPEII.

tain as its neighbour, but it is fire, and not snow, that the people have to fear who make their homes within sight of the smoke-wreathed cone of Vesuvius.

The Neapolitan peasants, instead of living in low wooden cottages, usually inhabit tall, strongly



VENETIAN PALACE.

built houses in narrow streets. Some of these houses are many stories high, and the people have

to mount steep flights of stairs before their homes are reached.

As may be imagined, the women cannot spare time to be running up and down stairs many times a day, so they have clever ways of saving themselves this trouble. Men go about the streets selling fruit, vegetables, fish, and other provisions, and, as they pass, baskets are let down on strings from the windows by women who wish to make purchases. There is usually a great deal of discussion and disputing between buyer and seller before a bargain is struck, but at last the money is let down in the basket, which is then drawn up again, filled to the brim with grapes, macaroni, or strange-looking fish.

In these districts, too, instead of a milkman calling at each house twice a day, a man or boy drives goats through the narrow streets, stopping at the house to milk them, and it is quite usual to see the goats entering houses, mounting the steep stairs, and being milked for customers who live on the different stories.

Vesuvius, the famous burning mountain, or volcano, is only a few miles away from Naples, and

at night the red glow of its lava streams may be seen. The inhabitants of the city are thus reminded of the terrible eruptions which have taken place in the past, when villages and towns have been destroyed.

There was one such eruption in 1908, and, although the lava did not reach Naples itself, the whole town was covered for days with a dense cloud of smoke and ashes, and several villages nearer to the mountain were overwhelmed.

Another terrible eruption took place in A.D. 79, when the two cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were entirely buried. The first of these towns was covered with ashes, and, although it was hidden completely, its buildings were not destroyed. The ashes have now been removed from a great part of Pompeii, and we can walk through the streets and into the houses where men, women, and little children lived more than a thousand years ago.

In those days the people of England were little more than savages, who dressed in skins and dwelt in mud huts, but the Romans, who built Pompeii, were a highly civilised nation. It is very interest-

ing to see their houses, in many of which there are statues and fountains, while beautiful pictures decorate the walls.

In one place there is a baker's shop, with the



RUSSIAN PEASANT'S HUT.

great ovens where bread used to be baked, and in the streets can still be seen the deep ruts made by the chariot-wheels of Roman soldiers and patricians.

10 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

There are many other strange homes in Europe, such as the old Venetian houses, whose marble steps lead down into canals instead of into streets, the Russian peasants' huts, with their great stoves, and the Spanish houses, where the rooms are built round a central patio, or courtyard, but it is impossible to describe them all now. Another time we must go still farther afield, and, crossing the Mediterranean, travel through the deserts and forests of Africa, and see how and where the little Arab and negro children live and work and play.

CHAPTER II

STRANGE HOMES IN AFRICA

AFRICA is a very large country, and in it we find many different kinds of homes, from the flat-roofed houses of the North to the quaint beehive huts—which seem to be all roof—of the Kameroons.

In Algeria, Morocco, and the other lands that lie along the Mediterranean coast, many of the people live almost entirely on the flat roofs of their houses, and even sleep there during the hot summer months. Inside, these African homes are often dark, dirty, and unwholesome, but it is pleasant on the roof, where there is usually an awning spread, or a vine trained across wooden poles, as a shelter from the blazing sun. There the little Arab children may be seen in their gay-coloured garments, playing and chattering together, or helping their mothers to prepare food and wind wool for spinning.

12 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

Goats and fowls are often taken up on to these roof homes, and it is strange to look down on to a North African town from a hill or from the window of a higher building.

The ground floor of an Algerian or Moorish



BEEHIVE HUTS OF THE KAMEROONS.

house is often a shop, but it is not at all like an English store, being merely a little square room open towards the street. Here fruit, vegetables, jewellery, woollen and cotton stuffs, or groceries of various sorts are displayed. The salesman sits

on the counter among his wares, praising them and chattering noisily as he bargains with intending customers.



IN ALGERIA.

Sometimes these stalls are also workshops, and then a second man sits in the street outside, busily stitching red and yellow leather shoes, hammering delicate patterns on to brass or copper trays, or

14 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

making the round felt caps that are worn by the Arab men and boys.



ON THE HOUSE-TOP, NORTH AFRICA.

Very curious wares may be seen exhibited in some of the native shops, and on the open stalls with which an African market-place is crowded.

It is quite usual to see exposed for sale piles of dried locusts, live lizards, and all kinds of strange beads, weapons, and ornaments, that have been brought from distant countries by Arab traders.



HOUSES AND SHOPS, MOROCCO.

We must now leave North Africa behind us and journey southward, across the sand-hills of the Sahara, and into the swamps and tangled forests of the tropics.

16 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

Here savages live in huts made of mud or leaves and reeds, and the villages are surrounded by strong fences which serve as a protection



A KAFFIR KRAAL.

against wild beasts and the attacks of hostile tribes.

There are other dangers, too, that threaten the poor ignorant negroes of Central and West Africa,

for often parties of Arab slave-dealers come down from the north, destroy the villages, and carry away the inhabitants as captives.

In East Africa live a people called the Kikuyus, who have many curious customs and legends. These natives have always kept apart from other negro nations, and it is said that their homes and their ways of living have hardly changed at all since prehistoric times.

The Kikuyus build themselves strong huts made of a thatch of reeds and grass on a wooden framework. These huts are clean and fairly comfortable dwelling-places, although they have no windows or chimneys, while the only opening is the door, which is closed at night by a hurdle made of woven creepers.

Round the interior of the hut, which is circular in shape, are bedsteads made of planks, and in the centre of it is a fire.

These people are a nation of herdsmen, and at night the goats and sheep are always allowed to sleep in the huts of their owners.

It is a very strange sight at sunset to see the animals making their way into the houses, stand-

18 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

ing round the fire and settling themselves under the rough, wooden bedsteads.

In Somaliland, another district of East Africa,



IN THE FRENCH SUDAN

the huts are very primitive and uncomfortable, consisting simply of six posts, which are fixed into the ground, tied together, and covered with woven mats. There is a small opening through

which the inhabitants can crawl in and out, and through which, when a fire is kindled, the smoke escapes.

The men of the Somali tribes are brave soldiers, but in times of peace they are very lazy, and leave all the work to be done by their wives and their slaves. It is quite usual to see one of these warriors resting under a tree, and singing to himself a strange chant about the battles he has fought and the enemies he has slain, while the women do all the necessary work of the camp.

In Somaliland there is also a very strange tribe called the Bajun, who have a language and customs of their own. These people say that they are descended from Persians who, long ago, settled in the country. This story is very likely true, for, in the district where they live, the ruins of stone buildings have been found which are very much like the houses still made in Persia.

In many other parts of East and West Africa there are remains of great buildings, which show that in old days the inhabitants of the land were very different from the ignorant savages of to-day.

20 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

In South Africa live the Kaffirs, whose houses, or huts, are called "kraals." These huts are made of mud, with thatched roofs. Like most native homes, they seem very bare and comfortless to English people, for in them are no chairs or tables. Indeed, there is generally no furniture of any kind, except a few mats, baskets, and pots and pans of clay or iron for cooking.

The little brown Kaffir boys and girls, however, manage to live very happy and contented lives in these simple surroundings. They have toys, games, and even children's parties, like their white brothers and sisters in far-away England.

These parties are rather curious entertainments. The boys play games together and have a great feast, for which, sometimes, a whole sheep is cooked ; but the little girls, who deck themselves in all their best beads and ornaments for the occasion, are expected to amuse themselves quietly with the clay or wooden dolls, or to listen to stories which are told to them by an old woman.

In spite of their games and their parties, life is not all play for the little Kaffirs, for, although many of them never go to school, they are taught,

even when quite young, to make themselves useful to their parents.

The boys act as herdsmen, and guard the sheep and goats as they wander about the plains and mountain-sides, later being given charge of the cattle, while the girls learn to cook, to make clay pottery, and to weave baskets and mats.

CHAPTER III

THE ANTIPODES

AUSTRALIA is a topsy-turvy country—we all know that. A country where June, July and August are winter months ; where the trees are blue instead of green, and never shed their leaves ; where the north wind blows hot, and the south wind cold ; where, according to the shape of the globe, people ought to be walking with their heads downwards ; and where the birds, beasts and children are going to bed at the very time when the sun is beginning to rise over the woods and green fields of Old England.

Certainly an upside-down land in every sense of the word ; but, all the same, if we sail eastward and land at Sydney, Melbourne, or Adelaide, we shall not, at first sight, find the houses and other buildings very different from those which we have left behind us “ At Home,” as the Australians themselves would say.

When we look round more attentively, however,

we find differences even in the towns, while up-country and in the Bush many strange and interesting homes are to be seen.

To begin with, Australia has a much warmer climate than England. For the sake of coolness, houses are built with wide verandas, which not only shelter the rooms from the blazing sun, but also themselves form pleasant open-air apartments in which the people live almost entirely during the summer months. Many Australian houses are built with only one story, like the bungalows of India and other tropical countries. These low rambling "cottages" look very picturesque against the blue-green background of the gum-trees.

These pretty and comfortable homes are, of course, inhabited by the white colonists, but the real natives of Australia are the black savages, called Aborigines. To see these strange people we must leave the cities behind us and travel away into the wild places of the great island continent.

Although Australia has now been an English colony for many years, the natives have never taken kindly to civilisation, and they are now

24 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

gradually dying out. Those tribes that remain still keep their old customs, and their dwelling-places are among the strangest and most primitive



AUSTRALIAN SETTLER'S HOME.

homes to be found in any land. Often, indeed, they are only rough screens from the wind and rain, and hardly even deserve the name of hut, being simply made of boughs of trees or sheets of

bark, and are open on one side towards the camp fire.

Other huts are a little more elaborate, but even these can easily be made by a couple of men or women in half an hour.

This is the way the natives set to work when they reach a suitable place in the forest or near a stream, and decide to make a new encampment :

First, a number of the long stiff stems of the grass-tree are collected, and after being fixed into the ground are tied firmly together at the top, so that a framework is formed. A thick thatch of reeds or grass is then added to make the roof and walls, and the dwelling-place is complete. These huts are quite strong and will last for months or even years, but, when once the camp has been moved, new dwellings are built, and the natives never return to their old habitations.

In some parts of Australia, cabins plastered with mud have been found, and the famous explorer, Eyre, tells of a village where the huts were dome-shaped and were made with substantial wood frames that were covered with turfs, the grassy side being turned outwards.

26 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

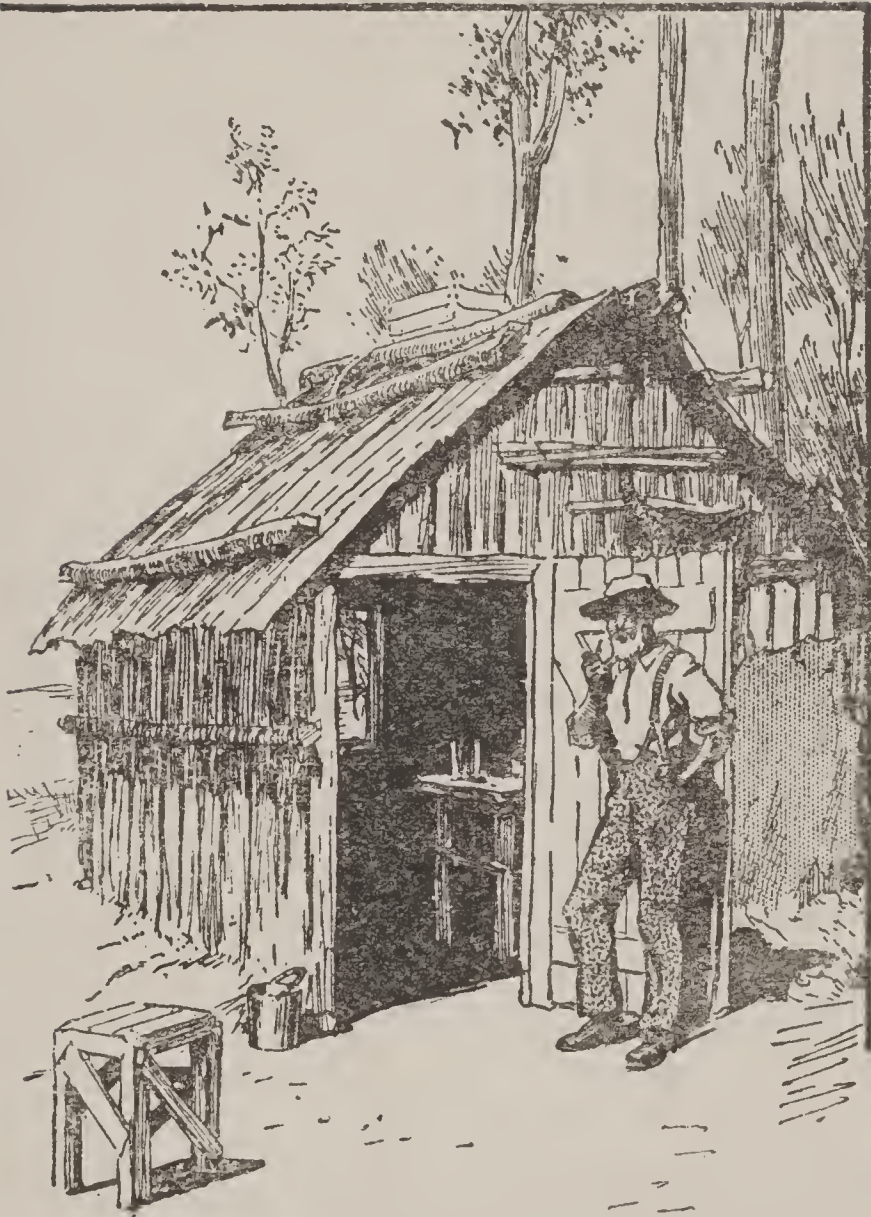
In another district, a two-storied dwelling has been seen, the upper floor being intended for use during the rainy season of the year.

In a native camp or village, tame animals—rats,



HUT OF AUSTRALIAN NATIVE.

bandicoots and opossums—are often to be seen. The children play with these creatures and tie them up at night, but as they are never fed the unfortunate pets soon die. Wallabies and emus, how-



A BUSH CABIN.

ever, which are also kept in captivity, are allowed to wander about as they please and pick up food.

28 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

The little Aboriginal children have many games, such as cat's-cradle and a kind of hide-and-seek, in which one player hides a number of beans and the others hunt for them. They also, like children



A MAORI HUT.

all the world over, pretend to be animals and warriors, and have toy spears, arrows, and other weapons.

The natives are not the only inhabitants of the "Bush"—as the wild, uncultivated land and

forest in Australia is called—for many white people now live there. Some are gold-diggers, and others are in charge of huge flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.

The huts of these men are often found in lonely



FISHERMAN'S FLOATING HOUSE.

clearings in the Bush. They are strange little dwellings enough, being simply one-roomed cabins, made of planks with a wide wooden chimney, and a roughly shuttered window.

Not far away from Australia in the South Pacific

30 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

Ocean are the islands of New Zealand, which form another important British colony. Although these countries are near together in point of dis-



GRASS HUT OF FIJI ISLANDERS.

tance, in other ways they are far apart, the animals, plants, natives, and climate being different.

The original inhabitants of New Zealand are

called Maoris. They are a fine and intelligent race, being much more like the people of the South Sea Islands than like the Australian natives.

Instead of rough shelters of rushes and boughs, these Maoris live in well-built huts, which are often decorated with elaborate carvings.

A New Zealand village is usually surrounded by a strong fence or stockade, and besides the huts it contains a storehouse where quantities of wood are kept. The storehouse is shaped like a dog-kennel, and is generally painted a bright red colour. It is mounted on high posts, so that the contents shall be secure from animals and thieves.

Other curious dwelling-places in the Antipodes are the floating homes of the fishermen who collect the *bêche-de-mer*, or sea-slug, which is considered a great delicacy in China and other Oriental countries; and the large grass huts of the Fiji islanders. These huts are most beautifully made with steep thatched roofs, and they are often as much as forty feet in height.

CHAPTER IV

AMERICA

NOWADAYS, if we go to the United States or to Canada, we shall find houses that are very much like those which we have left behind us in the cities and villages of England, but, in former times, things were very different. The great continent was then inhabited by wild, lawless savages, and some of the strangest homes in the whole world are to be found in the forests and on the vast plains of North America.

When the first explorers landed on the shores of the new land, they believed that they had reached India, so they called the natives Indians. This name has remained, but now there are not very many of these old inhabitants left. To find them, and learn something of their habits and homes, we must journey up to the far North, or go to the Reserves, which are tracts of land set apart for the Indians in different districts of the country.

Many of the natives have adopted the habits and dress of their white conquerors, but others still



INDIAN WIGWAM.

cling to old customs and live in tents and huts, as they did hundreds of years ago, before Sebastian

34 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

Cabot or Columbus sailed westward across the Atlantic Ocean in quest of a new world.

Perhaps the best known of all the Red Indian homes is the wigwam, which is a circular tent made of a pointed framework of wood, covered with dried skins of animals or with birch bark. In old



PIMA INDIAN HUT.

times some of these wigwams, especially those of the Crow tribe of Indians, were very large, and would hold as many as fifty men. They were gaily painted on the outside, and decorated with fringes and embroideries of coloured porcupine quills.

An Indian encampment looks very picturesque when seen from a distance, but nearer at hand it is not so attractive. The narrow passages between the huts are dirty and littered with rubbish of all



NAVAJO INDIAN.

sorts, and fierce dogs are allowed to wander about as they please.

Other Indian huts are made of reeds and grass, and look very much like the beehive dwellings of

36 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

Central Africa, while some, again, are built of dried mud, and have no windows, only an opening for a door, and a hole in the roof, through which the smoke of the fire is allowed to escape.

There is practically no furniture in these strange homes, and English boys and girls would think them very rough and uncomfortable, but the Indian children lead happy lives in the warm summer months, and have many games in the forests and streams of their native land.

In winter, however, the children have to share the hardships of the grown-up people, for the weather is often terribly cold. Food is scarce, and fierce gales and snowstorms sweep down from the frozen Arctic regions.

We must leave the north now, and travel southward until we come to Mexico. This is one of the strangest countries in the whole world, for, long ago, even when it was discovered by Europeans in the sixteenth century, this land was highly civilised, and its people were skilled in the arts of sculpture and architecture.

Now everything is changed, and the great buildings and temples of the past are heaps of ruins.

The Indians, or Pueblos, as the descendants of the ancient Mexicans are called, are an interesting



IN MEXICO.

race, and among them traces can still be found of the knowledge and culture of their ancestors.

Most of the houses in Mexican towns and vil-



AMONG THE PUEBLOS.

lages are built of adobe, or dried mud. Some of them are very picturesque, for they are white-washed, or painted in bright colours, and they

often have two, three, or even six stories. The roofs of the houses are flat, and, at a short distance, a Mexican town looks very much like the Arab cities of Tunisia and Algeria.

Among the different tribes of Pueblo Indians that are scattered over the country, many very curious dwelling-places are found. The Cora Indians, for instance, live in little stone huts which have no windows, and therefore are unbearably hot and stuffy, whilst the inhabitants of the forest districts build themselves strong cabins of logs with steep gabled roofs. These roofs, like those of the Swiss *châlets*, are kept in place by rows of heavy stones.

The Mexican Indians live happily and contentedly in their simple homes, for they are a cheerful race, as a rule, and are fond of games and sport. Shooting-matches with bows and arrows are very popular, while both men and women are good runners and often join in races. A foot-race generally begins at noon and lasts for four hours or longer. No prize is given to the winner in the contest, but he is greatly praised and admired by the spectators, who, while the race is

going on, make bets with each other as to its result.

The little Mexican children also have their own amusements, and are given roughly-made dolls and stuffed squirrels as playthings.

The Pueblos are very fond of their children, and treat them with great kindness, no child ever being beaten or punished in any way. As may be imagined, the little ones, in consequence, are often very much spoilt, but they are merry, gentle little creatures, and, as they grow older, they soon learn to make themselves useful to their parents. The boys are taught by their fathers to shoot and hunt, while the girls learn to spin, to weave the blankets which are worn as garments by both men and women, and to embroider.

One of the most curious towns in the whole of Mexico is Laguna, which is situated on the summit of a high cliff, and in old times was a strong fortress.

In this place the houses have no doors or windows on the lower floor, and the upper stories can only be reached by ladders, which are drawn up after the inhabitants have ascended to their homes.

In the floor of the higher story are openings which lead down to the lower rooms. These are used as storerooms for food and fodder.



MOSQUITO-PROOF HOUSE, PANAMA

In some villages the houses are all built round an open square, or courtyard, where the inhabitants of the different dwellings meet together.

There are no chairs or tables in the homes of

42 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

the Pueblos, but dried skins of animals are spread on the hard mud floors, and these serve as seats, beds, and carpets. The walls are hung with bows, arrows, and other weapons, and on the floor are ranged rows of flat dishes, cooking-pots, and gourds for water.

We go south again, and instead of Mexico, with its relics of ancient art and ancient civilisation, find ourselves in Panama, where marvellous triumphs of modern skill and science are to be seen, for here is the great canal which joins the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean, and makes a short cut from Europe to the Far East.

Panama is a tropical country, and is very unhealthy, but lately it has been discovered that the infection of the deadly yellow fever is carried from one person to another by mosquitoes.

The houses of the district, therefore, are now furnished with outside screens of wire gauze, so fine that none of the dangerous insects can get through into the rooms within.

These mosquito-proof buildings look just like huge meat-safes, and that is what they are called by the people who live in them.

CHAPTER V

ASIA

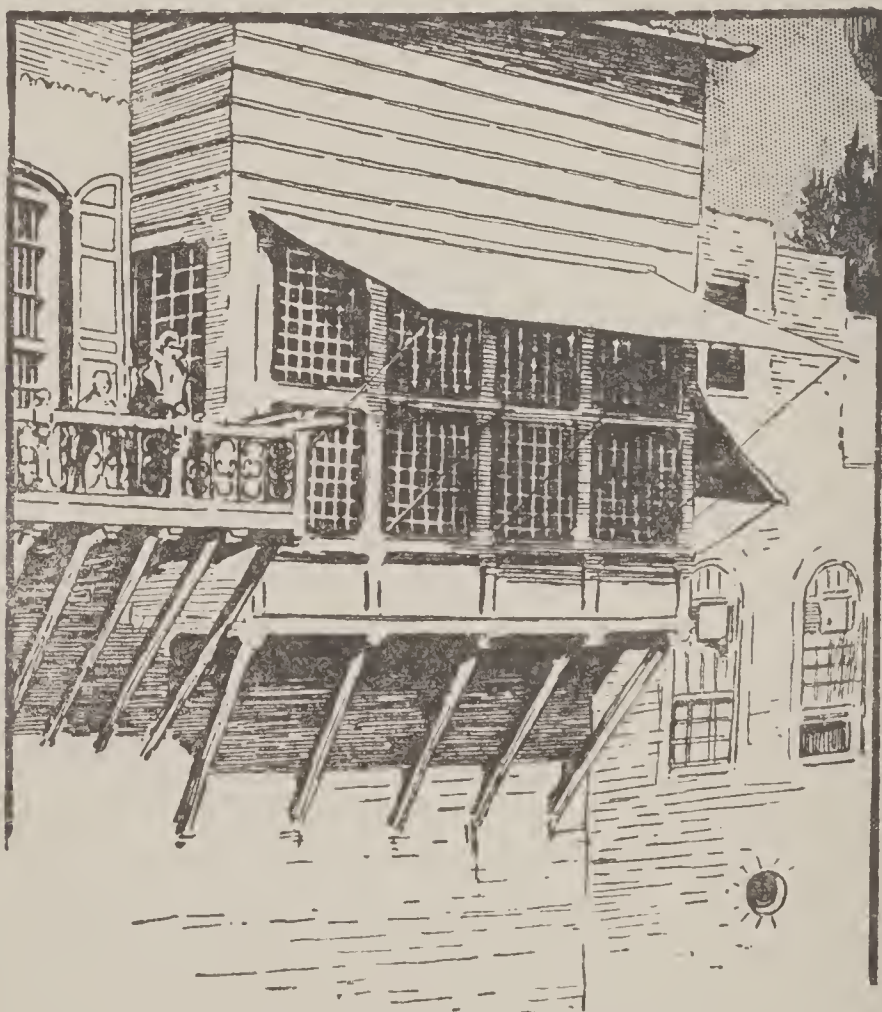
ASIA is the largest continent in the world, and it is inhabited by many different nations, so, as is only natural, we find in it all sorts of strange dwelling-places. There are the elaborate balconied houses of Bagdad, which look as if Aladdin himself might have dwelt in them; and there are the miserable, mud-built hovels of Turkestan. There are the tents of the Siberian nomads, among the ice and snow of the Arctic regions; and, many thousand miles away, we find palm-leaf huts in the dense shade of tropical forests.

North, south, east, and west—black men, white men, brown men, and yellow men—it is difficult to know where to begin or which curious homes to describe.

We will go to the eastern countries first, coming as we do from Europe, and, landing at Jaffa or Beyrout, make our way through Syria to the

44 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

mountains of Lebanon. Here live a strange war-like race called the Druses, who have their homes



BALCONIED HOUSE, BAGDAD.

high up on the hilltops, often hidden by thick clouds from the sight of dwellers in the valleys beneath.

In a Druse village the houses are built on a steep slope, and look, with their flat roofs, like the steps of a great staircase.

They are clustered closely together, the roof of one forming the courtyard of another, and are made of stone and wood, thickly plastered over with yellow clay. The dwellings are very rough and uncomfortable, one opening serving both for door and window, and instead of cupboards and shelves there are holes scooped out between the stones of the walls.

The houses of the sheikhs, or chief men of the villages, are rather better built. These sometimes have two stories, the lower floor being used as a cattle-shed. The outside of a Druse dwelling is decorated with rough patterns scratched on the clay wall, and there is usually a projecting bin, or trough, for corn.

Coming down from the mountains, we travel eastward again and come to Mesopotamia, which lies between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. This is a very dry, barren country, and as there are no trees, the dome-shaped houses are made entirely of sun-baked bricks. Each home consists of

several of these beehive-like huts, two or three being occupied by the family, while the cattle have one to themselves and another is used as a store-house.

We cross a range of mountains now, and enter Persia, and here, in the towns, we find many large and well-built houses. These look ugly and uninteresting from the outside, but, when the entrance is passed, they often prove to be well furnished and even luxurious, according to Eastern ideas. The rooms open into courtyards filled with flowers, and there are fine carpets and hangings. The women have their own rooms, and when they go out they wear veils, and large cloaks which cover them from head to foot.

The poor people in Persian towns spend most of their time out of doors, while carpenters, barbers, and even bakers can be seen at work in the road outside their little shops.

North of Persia is Turkestan, where we see the primitive mud-built homes of the Turkomans, a wild, savage race, who make raids across the border and are a terror to their neighbours. Because of this danger, the villages on the frontier are

built like forts, circular in shape and surrounded with an immensely strong wall. These walls are



COURTYARD OF A PERSIAN HOUSE.

often twenty or thirty feet thick and forty feet high. There is only one entrance, and this, besides being too narrow to allow a man on horseback to

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pass through, is protected by a granite door. The dwelling-houses in these curious villages are built on the summits of the walls, the enclosures within



ON THE TURKESTAN FRONTIER.

being filled with rough sheds in which cattle are kept.

In order that people may be able to pass from



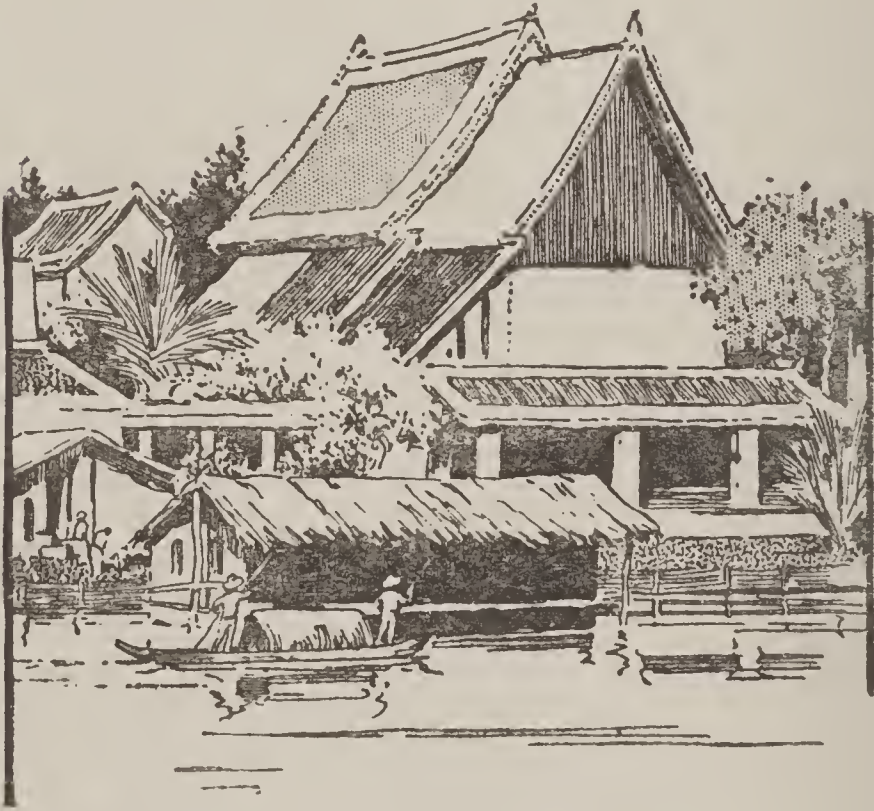
THE AFGHAN BORDER.

one house to another, there is a rough balcony which encircles the outside of the wall. This is

50 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

made of interlaced branches of trees plastered with mud, and although it has no rail, women and little children use it fearlessly.

From Persia we go to Afghanistan, and here

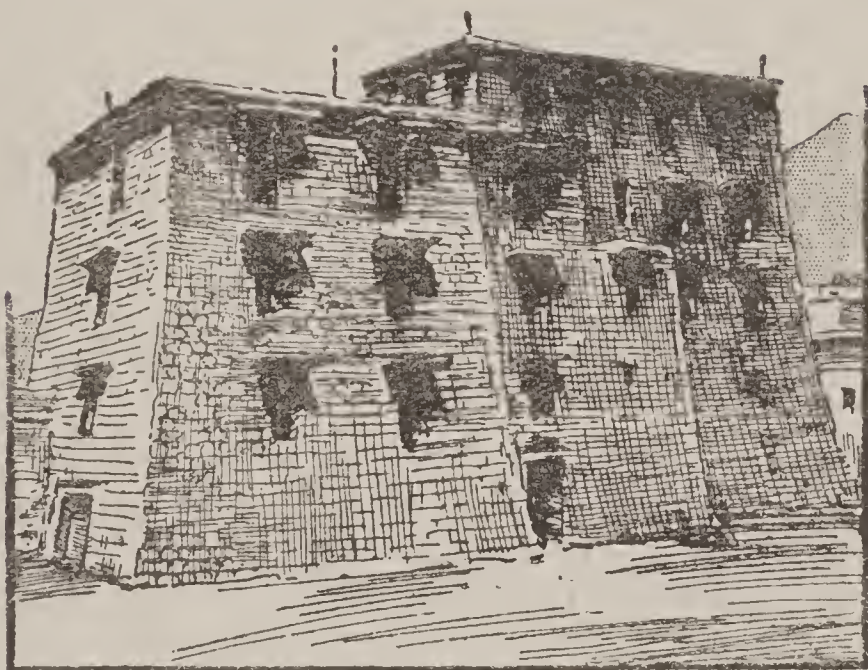


IN BANGKOK, SIAM.

the people fight not only with their neighbours, but among themselves, two men in the same village, or even in the same family, often being deadly enemies. Therefore we find that the

houses are strongly built, and that the men carry guns even when they work in the fields.

To the north of India, and beyond the great barrier of the Himalaya Mountains, lies Thibet, a strange country which, until lately, has been



A HOUSE IN THIBET.

visited by very few travellers. The towns and villages are often perched on high pinnacles of rock, the sides of which are so steep that it seems as if only birds could possibly reach the quaint, inaccessible dwelling-places. The religion of the

52 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

people of this country is Buddhism, and there are many large monasteries, where monks, called lamas, live. The monasteries are large, imposing buildings, with the walls sloping inwards. They are generally situated on the summits of hills, and round them are fortified towns or scattered houses.

We leave the mountains and travel southward, across India, until we come to Siam, a beautiful tropical land of blue skies, blazing sunshine, and graceful palm-trees. Here, instead of being made of solid stone, the houses are lightly built of canes or bamboos, with roofs of interwoven grass or palm leaves. The people here are a cheerful, light-hearted race, vain, and fond of gay-coloured clothing and amusement.

Children in Siam, as in most of the countries of southern Asia, are very kindly treated, and lead happy lives. They play half naked in the sunshine, or, on festival days, are dressed up like little men and women, buying sweetmeats, watching dances and games, or staring, wide-eyed, at elaborate illuminations and fireworks.

CHAPTER VI

CHINA AND JAPAN

FAR away, on the east of Asia, are two great countries, China and Japan, and in them we find curious and interesting homes which are unlike any others in the whole world.

The Chinese have for many hundreds of years been an educated and civilised people, and although their customs and ideas are different from those of Europe, in many arts and manufactures they are unrivalled. The porcelains, silks, and enamels of China are wonderful, and in the houses of the rich mandarins of Peking, Canton, and the other great cities, exquisite ornaments and pieces of furniture are to be seen.

Chinese dwelling-places, however, according to our Western notions, are uncomfortable, for they are very draughty. The window-panes are made of paper instead of glass, and, except in the northern districts, the houses are not heated. In

54 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

the north, where the winters are very cold, rooms have a raised platform made of brickwork at one end, in which are charcoal fires. On this platform



IN CHINA.

the people sleep, lying on mats with their heads supported by little pillows of bamboo or lacquered wood.

The homes of the poorer classes in China are damp, dirty, and unhealthy. Indeed, they are often merely windowless hovels of mud or stone.

As a rule, in Chinese homes there is only one cooking utensil, this being a large earthenware



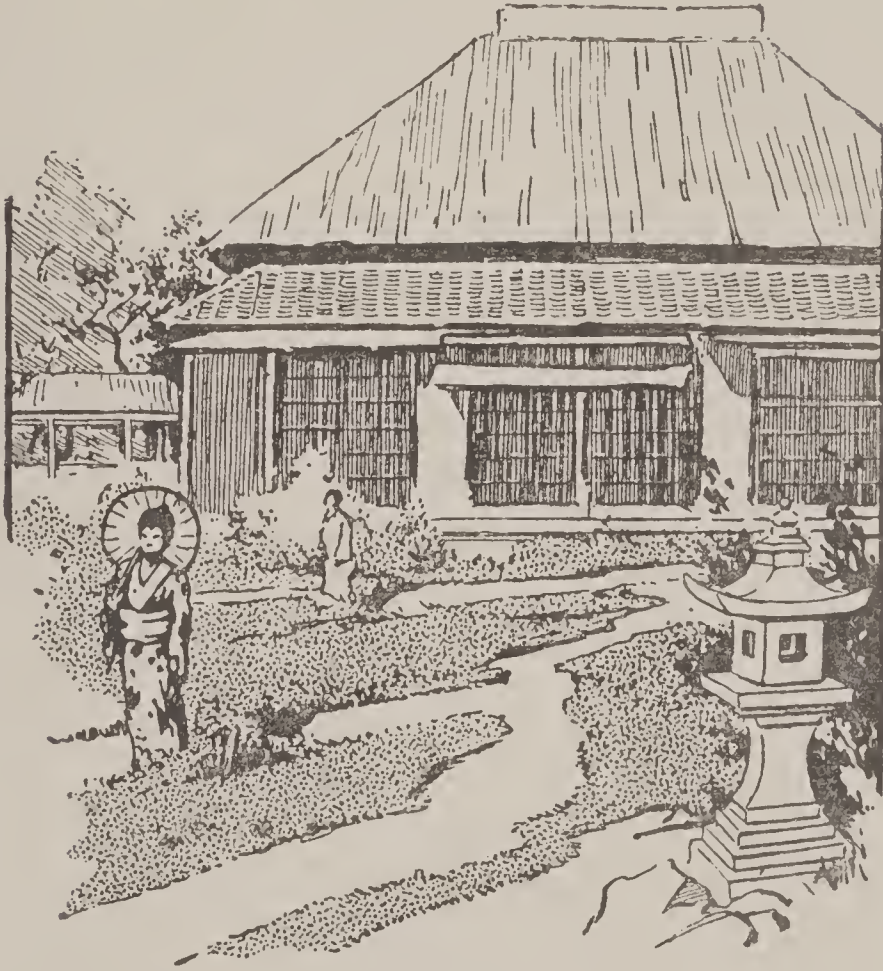
A POOR CHINAMAN'S HOME.

pot or basin set in masonry with a fire of charcoal under it. Only one dish, therefore, can be prepared at a time. Cooked food and hot water are often sold in the streets. In warm weather the Chinese live almost entirely out of doors, and use the part of the road in front of their houses as if it



A STREET IN CHINA.

were their own property. This makes the streets almost impassable, especially as they are always



IN JAPAN.

very narrow and crowded with foot passengers, carriers, and sedan-chairs.

Japan in some ways is like China, but of late many changes have taken place, and European

habits, ideas and costumes have been adopted. There are still, however, many homes to be seen that are entirely Japanese, and men, women and children continue to wear the quaint, picturesque clothes that we know so well.

A Japanese house is one of the prettiest and daintiest in the world, and rather reminds us of a Swiss *châlet*, with its wooden walls and wide, overhanging roof. It is often surrounded with a fenced garden, and near the door is a little enclosure in which outdoor shoes are left. As the Japs say, they do not make streets of their homes, and visitors must always take off their shoes before entering a house, or else put on loose straw slippers which, at native inns, are provided for the purpose. Inside the dwelling the floor is covered with fine straw mats. These are yellow in colour and are always the same length and breadth, so that the size of a room is calculated by the number of mats required, and is called a six-mat or an eight-mat apartment. There are no inner walls to a Japanese house, but movable screens of paper are used to divide the rooms from each other. The furniture in these dainty homes is very simple

and scanty, for there are no large tables, arm-chairs, or thick carpets. The people sit on the



A JAPANESE ROOM.

floor on wadded cushions, and there is usually a little wooden stand or table about twelve inches high, on which food or a tea-tray can be set. The

room has for ornament a single picture or a vase of artistically arranged flowers.

The Japanese are a cheerful, contented race, and they have many festivals and amusements. There is, perhaps, no country in the world where children are treated so kindly, and very pretty the black-eyed little creatures look in their bright-coloured dresses and carrying their toys and dolls. May 5th is the festival of the little boys, when picnics and children's parties are held. In November the girls have their turn, for then comes the feast of dolls, when numbers of gorgeously dressed dolls, which have been handed down from mother to daughter for generations, are arranged in rows in the houses and provided with miniature furniture and toy tea-pots. Japanese children are now being taught European games, so perhaps, before long, the picturesque old customs and festivals will be forgotten.

A street in Japan presents a very gay and animated scene, for coloured signs, flags, and lanterns hang in front of the shops, while the narrow passage between the buildings is crowded with buyers and sellers. There are costermongers

carrying their merchandise in baskets suspended on long poles, women with babies strapped to



A STREET IN JAPAN.

their backs, and schoolboys wearing a quaint mixture of Oriental and European costumes.

The Japanese are very fond of flowers, and in the spring there are elaborate festivals in honour of the cherry and plum blossom, when everyone crowds out of the cities to see the fruit-trees covered with their masses of pink and white bloom.

It is strange to think that these smiling, pleasure-loving people belong to a nation which is rapidly throwing off its old customs, and has already an army and a navy which bid fair to rival those of the Western World.

CHAPTER VII

INDIA

INDIA, which is one of the most important of all the great British possessions, is also perhaps the most interesting. It has, indeed, always been a land of romance and mysterious splendour, ever since the old days when brave explorers from England, Portugal, and Holland travelled eastward through the deserts of Asia, or set sail in their little ships across the unknown Atlantic Ocean, in order to find a new and short route to the wonderful “Indies.”

The very name of India calls up pictures of rajahs’ palaces, with gilded halls and jewel-studded ceilings; but if we want really to see the Hindoos at home, we must turn aside from the residences of the princes and nobles, with their strange mixture of Oriental magnificence and European luxury, and go into the narrow streets of the cities,

and into the humble villages of the plains and mountains.

Town houses in India are often large, with carved wooden balconies or façades decorated with delicately patterned stucco. The exteriors of these buildings are beautiful and imposing enough,



AN INDIAN PEASANT'S HOME.

but inside as a rule we find dirt and squalor, steep, ill-ventilated staircases, dingy rooms, and windows which, although screened with exquisite carved work, admit very little fresh air or sunlight.

The women in a Hindoo family live apart, their portion of the home being called the zenana, and

on the rare occasions when they go out they are closely veiled. The life led by these women is very dull and monotonous, for they are married when quite little girls, and are as a rule almost entirely uneducated. Even when grown-up they are strangely foolish and childish, delighting in gay clothes and elaborate jewellery, eating quantities of sweetmeats, and sometimes even amusing themselves with dolls and other playthings.

Among the most picturesque of Indian town homes are the tall houses on the river banks at Srinagar, with their flat roofs, on which grass and flowers grow luxuriantly.

Peasant life in India is very different from that of the townsfolk, and village homes are as a rule mere mud-built hovels surrounded by fences of reeds or plaited grass. This fence is intended as a screen, not a protection, and in the little enclosure which it forms much of the work of the household is carried on. We see women there grinding corn, spinning, or preparing curry, little girls learning to help their mothers, and brown, bright-eyed babies playing happily in the warm dust.

Among the mountains of Hindustan, where the natives are still wild and uncivilised, some very strange homes are to be found. The most curious perhaps are the huts of the Todas in the



A TODA HUT.

Nilgheri Hills. A Toda hut, which is much like half an overturned barrel in shape, is made with the walls and roof in one. There is no window, and the doorway is so small that the occupants



A TOWN HOUSE, GWALIOR.

have to enter on their hands and knees. Inside, when our eyes become accustomed to the gloom, we see a rough mud platform surrounding the walls, and on this the members of the family sleep.

A Toda village consists of a group of these strange dwelling-places, the whole surrounded by a strong wooden fence, which is a safeguard against the attacks of wild beasts or of enemies.

The Todas are dairy farmers. Milk is their chief food, and they look upon the buffalo as a sacred animal. When the grass in the neighbourhood of their village is exhausted, they move away to fresh pastures and build themselves new homes.

Other strange Indian dwellings are those of the Lushai, which are built in almost inaccessible positions on the steep slopes of mountains. They are made of wood, and are erected on curious platforms which project from the hillside. A Lushai village sometimes consists of as many as a hundred and fifty houses. They are fairly clean, although pigs, fowls, and dogs roam about at will up and down the steep paths and among the supporting posts of the wooden platforms.



HOUSE ON RIVER BANK, SRINAGAR.

70 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

In the south of India and among the palm-groves of tropical Ceylon we find very different homes, built of wood or of bamboos, and with thatched roofs.



IN CEYLON.

Across the great Bay of Bengal is Burmah, Further India as it is sometimes called, and here lives a race of gay, light-hearted people, who, with their smiling faces and bright-coloured garments, seem more like the Japanese than the Hindoos.

The homes of Burmah are very picturesque, being raised above the ground on posts. There is a veranda, and here a cradle for the baby is generally to be seen, suspended from the roof.



AMONG THE LUSHAI.

Babies play an important part in Burmese home-life, and there is perhaps no country in the East where they are so much petted and indulged. Until children reach the age of seven years they

72 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

are allowed to play all day long, they are dressed in elaborate clothes, and are even given large cheroots to smoke. When they grow older the boys are sent to school, and the little girls learn to make themselves useful at home.

CHAPTER VIII

CAVE-DWELLINGS

THOUSANDS of years ago, in the days when Europe was covered with dense forest and dangerous swamps, the men and women, instead of building themselves houses, lived in caves and hollows in the rocks. These are the oldest known dwelling-places, and caverns are now often discovered which show traces of their former inhabitants, such as charred bones, flint weapons, or implements, and pictures of deer, mammoths, or other animals roughly scratched on the rock walls.

Some of these caves have been found near Santander, in Spain, and here may be seen portraits of horses and buffaloes which were drawn, and skilfully drawn too, by the artists of the Stone Age twenty-five thousand years ago.

The huge mammoths and many of the other strange animals of the far-off days are extinct now, but there are still cave-dwellers to be found, even

in Europe itself. Among the best known and most interesting of these are the gipsies of Granada.

Gipsies, as we all know, have the character of



AMONG THE SPANISH GIPSIES.

being thieves and vagrants, and this was the case in the Middle Ages as it is to-day.

The inhabitants of the great Spanish city of Granada would not have the gipsies living in their midst, and so, hundreds of years ago, they were expelled. Instead of leaving the country, they

made homes for themselves in the caves of some rocky hills that lie just outside the town.

There they, or rather their descendants, still live, and visitors to Granada driving through the district are shown the quaint little cave homes on the sunny hillside. The gipsies seem to be quite happy and comfortable in their strange dwelling-places, and, through the doorways, glimpses can be caught of cosy rooms with chairs and tables, and with bright pictures on the walls and gay-coloured curtains fluttering at the little rock-hewn windows.

From Spain we go southward to the Spanish colony of the Grand Canary, and there we find the wonderful cave village of Atalaya, which is situated at a distance of about eight miles from Las Palmas.

Nearly six hundred years ago, when the Canary Islands, or the Fortunate Islands, were discovered, stories were told of savages who lived in caves and burrows in the rocks. Perhaps the present cave-dwellers are descended from these Gouaches, as they were called, but this is not quite certain.

The caves of Atalaya vary very much, some of

them being merely rough holes in the rocky mountain-side, while others have had walls built in



CAVE-DWELLINGS IN THE CANARY ISLANDS.

front, porches added, and open spaces covered in with roofs.

The Canary Island cave-dwellers are a strange, lawless race. They are lazy, too, and instead of working they prefer to sit in the sun outside their

little homes and beg for money from the tourists who come up from Las Palmas to visit the village.



IN ALGERIA.

Atalaya is really one of the most curious places in the world, for the caves are hollowed out one

78 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

above another, making it look like a huge ant-hill or rabbit warren. Narrow tracks lead through the village, sometimes crossing over one home and tunnelling under another. The whole scene is very picturesque and full of colour. Flowers



CAVE-DWELLINGS IN CHINA.

and curious cactus-plants grow in front of many of the caves, the dress of the women is brightened by the gay handkerchiefs that they wear twisted round their heads, long lines of clothes hang out to dry in the wind or are spread on the rocky ground, and away in the distance is a beautiful



ALEXANDER SELKIRK'S CAVE.

view of blue mountains and the wide Atlantic Ocean.

On the mainland of Africa, which is not far away across this same Atlantic, there are many

other cave-dwellings, some in Algeria and others in the South. In Basutoland, for instance, natives still live in caverns which were inhabited by their ancestors the Bushmen.

One of these South African caves is very large, and a whole tribe shelters in it, another cavern near at hand being used for the cattle.

On the rocky walls of this place are to be seen some of the quaint, uncouth portraits of animals which were drawn long ago by the prehistoric artists.

In China and other parts of Asia there are also caves which are used as homes, but perhaps the most interesting of all these primitive dwellings are those in a range of mountains called the Sierra Madre, in Mexico.

In this district, as in Africa, remains of ancient cave homes are still to be found, and no doubt many of the present rocky homes have been inhabited for hundreds, or even, perhaps, thousands of years.

Some of these Mexican caves are large and are divided into a number of rooms. A low wall at the entrance serves as a protection against bad



MEXICAN CAVE-DWELLINGS.

82 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

weather, and often a terrace of adobe, or sun-baked mud, is built in front. The inner walls of the home are plastered with mud, and skins of deer and other animals are spread out on the hard floor.

There is very little furniture in these caverns. Three stones in the centre of the floor serve as a fireplace, and the smoke finds its way out at the entrance, or through cracks in the rock above.

When the cave-dwellings are situated high up on the steep mountain-side, wooden ladders lead up to them, or sometimes rough steps are cut in the cliff, or a notched tree-trunk is used as a staircase.

Besides these cave-dwellers in different parts of the world, who have chosen their strange homes or have inherited them from far-off prehistoric ancestors, there have been many fugitives or shipwrecked sailors who have been obliged to take shelter in caverns.

The best known of these is Alexander Selkirk, who lived for more than four years in a rocky hollow on the island of Juan Fernandez, and who was the original of the famous story-book hero, Robinson Crusoe.

CHAPTER IX

MOVING HOMES

HOWEVER charming our homes may be, it is probable that most people wish sometimes that houses were movable, and that they could now and then change their surroundings completely. It would be delightful to wake up in the morning and find a new view outside the windows, to have green fields, perhaps, instead of streets, or a south aspect instead of a north one, and to be able to go out of doors and walk along fresh pathways and through unknown woods and meadows.

We have all, I am sure, often envied gipsies, with their freedom and wandering lives, and wished that we, too, could have a gaily painted red or yellow van, an old horse to drag it, and a new camping-ground every night.

In thinking about moving homes it is well to begin with the gipsies, for we are all of us familiar

with the sight of these curious people who wander about through England, and, indeed, through all the world, with no fixed place of abode, but with

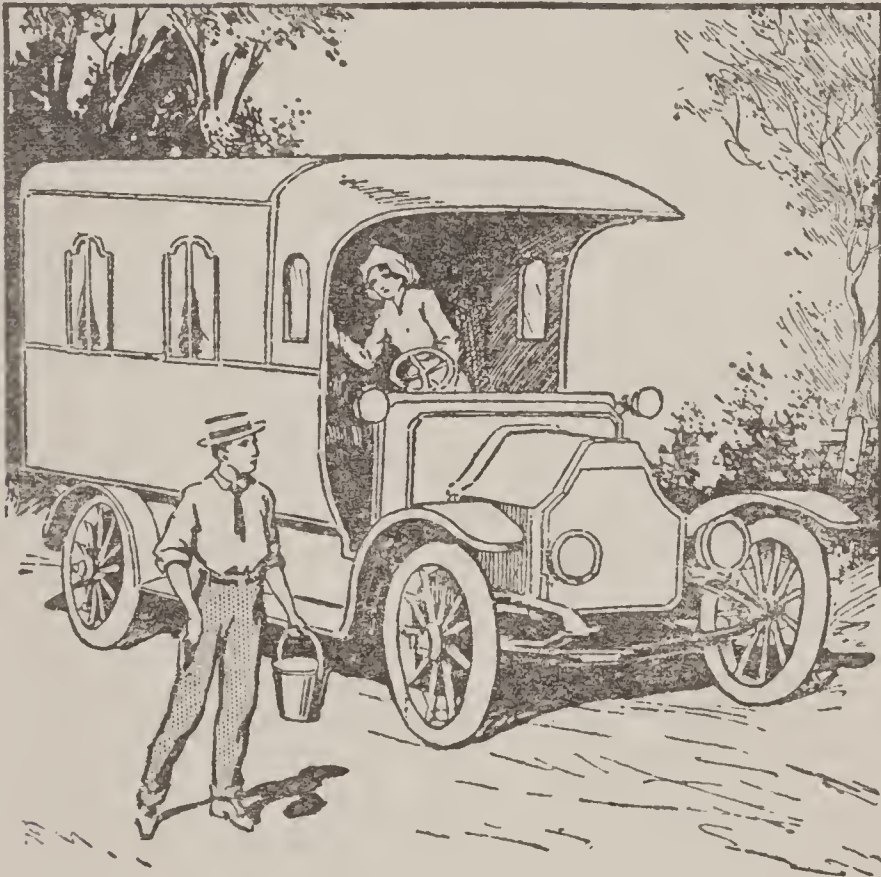


GIPSY CARAVAN.

customs, legends, and a language that are all their own.

Nobody really knows where the gipsies came

from in the first place, but it is said that they are of Oriental origin, and that their name means Egyptian. They have always had bad characters,



MOTOR CARAVAN.

and have been called thieves and vagabonds, but in spite of their faults, they are an interesting people, and there is no more picturesque sight than a gipsy camp in some wood or by the side of

86 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

a road, when the women with their gay-coloured handkerchiefs on their heads are bending over the



DUTCH BARGE.

cooking-pot at the wood fire, and the dark, bright-eyed children are playing noisily on the grass.

Nowadays many people hire vans and pass their

summer holidays as amateur gipsies, and lately even motor caravans have been seen on the English roads.

Other moving homes in Europe are the barges of Holland, which travel slowly from place to place along the canals. They have whole families on board, who, parents, children, and little black dogs, seem to lead very happy and comfortable lives in the long, low-lying boats.

People who spend their time in wandering about are called nomads. Perhaps the best-known nomads in the world are the Arabs who live in the great sandy deserts of Asia and Africa, and who, with their tents, their camels, and their herds of goats and sheep, move from place to place in order to buy and sell merchandise, or in search of food and water.

All travellers to the East have seen the long lines of the Arab caravans on their journeys, the camels with their heavy loads of household gear, or with the quaint palanquins in which the women travel, the men on horseback or driving the herds, the children and the fierce, unkempt-looking watch-dogs. At sunset the camp is seen near

88 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

some desert well or under the palms of an oasis, with the dark low tents, the fire kindled for the evening meal, and the snarling camels with their



ARAB TENTS.

bundles of green fodder or outspread cloths of grain.

In the old days of the South African colonies many English and Dutch people led nomadic lives, travelling across the plains in tilted waggons which were drawn by teams of long-horned oxen.

These waggons made very comfortable moving homes, but often great dangers and hardships

used to be encountered during the journeys into unexplored districts. Flooded rivers would have



BOER WAGGON.

to be forded, unhealthy swamps crossed, and, besides, the waggon and its occupants might have

90 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

to be defended against attacks of savages or fierce wild beasts.

Many of the tribes in Siberia are nomadic and wander from place to place with their tents and



SIBERIAN NOMADS.

their herds of horses, cattle or reindeer. In the winter these people live in great encampments and their tents sometimes stretch for miles at the foot of the mountains.

From Asia we go across the Pacific Ocean to

America, and there, both in the North and the South, we find many nomadic tribes.

Among the most curious are the Patagonians, who in old times were believed to be a race of giants. The word Patagonian means large feet, and most likely this name was given because all the people, even the little children, wear boots made of rough leather.

These natives live in tents which are divided into several apartments. There is a roofless enclosure in front, where the fire is lit. The tent itself is made of skins, and on the upright posts, which form the supports, and which extend above the roof, large pieces of raw meat are fixed in order that they may be dried by the sun and the wind. The Patagonians are great horsemen and often go for long hunting expeditions. They use a very curious weapon called the "bolas," which consists of several balls fastened together with thongs of leather. When this weapon is flung at an animal it becomes entangled in its legs, throwing it to the ground and enabling it to be captured. The men are wonderfully skilful in the art of throwing the bolas, and little

boys may be seen practising on dogs with a small weapon.

Below Patagonia are the Strait of Magellan and the island of Tierra del Fuego, and here, too, we find a nomadic race, who are besides the most southern inhabitants of the world. These are the Yahgan Indians, and they live in rough wigwams made of boughs of trees over which skins are sometimes stretched.

The Yahgan huts are among the most primitive dwelling-places in the world, for they have no windows or chimneys, and the smoke of the fire, which is kindled inside the wigwam, has to escape as it can through the entrance or through cracks in the roof.

The Yahgans sometimes stay for a long time in one place, only moving when they find that they cannot procure food or water. They are quite uncivilised, and terrible stories are told of their cruelty to sailors who have been shipwrecked on the dangerous shores of their island.

CHAPTER X

EGYPT

WE have all heard of the unchanging East, but if we want to understand what the words really mean, we must go to Britain's most recent possession, Egypt.

There we shall see homes exactly like those in which people lived thousands of years ago, and men working in the fields and filling the irrigation trenches on the Nile bank just as their ancestors worked in the far-off days, when the Pharaohs reigned and when the children of Israel toiled through hot, sunny days at their thankless tasks.

In the cities of Egypt, such as Cairo and Alexandria, we find a strange mixture of dwellings. Modern buildings, such as may be seen in Paris or London, crowd against tall, Oriental houses with flat roofs, alcoved courtyards, and carved wooden balconies and shutters. In the narrow streets, or bazaars, are quaint, open shops,

where the merchants sit cross-legged among their wares and bargain noisily with eager customers over scarlet leather slippers, brass pots and trays, or slender glass bottles filled with geranium, amber, and other curious perfumes.

The people who throng these streets are no less interesting and varied than the buildings. Here are tall Bedouin Arabs, in their white burnouses and flowing, graceful robes; ebony-faced Nubians with flashing eyes and teeth; brown Egyptians; Jews, Turks, and all sorts of other people.

There are always numbers of donkey-boys in the streets of an Egyptian town, each leading his animal, which is decorated with gaily coloured bead necklaces and has its coat clipped into elaborate patterns. These donkeys are given English names by their little masters, and we are told that "Lord Kitchener" is the best galloper in Cairo, and that "Gingerbread," "Cromer," or "Chocolate," may be secured for two shillings an hour.

However, strange and fascinating as Egyptian town life is, if we want to see the real unchanging East, we must leave the noise and brilliant colour

of Cairo behind us and travel southward up the great highway of the Nile, past the huge ruined temples, relics of the science and artistic skill of ancient times, and the barrages and dams that are the wonders of our modern world.



HOUSES OF SUN-BAKED MUD.

Here, on either bank of the river, as our steamer glides along, we see mud-built villages looking like brown islands in the vivid green sea of the growing crops.

The homes of the peasants, or fellaheen as they

are called in Egypt, are very simple and primitive buildings, fashioned of sun-baked mud, and as one house crumbles to pieces, another is raised on



A NURSERY AT THEBES, UPPER EGYPT.

its ruins. Gradually the whole village rises higher and higher, until at last it stands upon a broad mound of dusty earth.



A STREET IN CAIRO.

The houses themselves, although they look picturesque when seen from a distance, are really squalid and dirty. These people seem to have no idea of making their homes comfortable. As we ride through the narrow pathways between the huddled dwellings, we catch sight, through the narrow doorways, of dark bare rooms and of untidy little courtyards littered with rubbish and heaps of fodder.

The roofs of the houses are flat. Rough, outside staircases lead up to them, and here stores of fuel are piled. The villagers have watch-dogs, fierce, wild-looking creatures, and these stand on the roofs or on the low walls of the courtyards and bark loudly at any passers-by.

In some of the villages near Luxor, in Upper Egypt, there are very strange structures which look like gigantic mushrooms hollowed out at the top. These, the natives tell us, are “nurseries,” and in the hot summer-time the little children are put into the shallow, cuplike enclosures and are there safe, out of reach of scorpions and dangerous snakes.

Other curious features in the Nile villages are



EGYPTIAN VILLAGE AND PIGEON-TOWER.

the pigeon-houses, often very large and much more imposing in appearance than the dwellings of the people themselves. These pigeon-cotes,

strangely enough, are not made in the same shape as the other buildings, but are copied exactly from the pylons, or great gateways, of the ancient temples.

The Egyptian peasants keep goats and cattle,



THE LATE KHALIFA'S HOUSE AT OMDURMAN.

and every morning the animals are taken out from the villages and tethered in the fields where they graze all day. In the evenings they are driven home again, and the long lines of buffaloes, camels, and goats are guided by boys and gaily clad little

100 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

girls along the narrow, dusty pathways that lead through green clover-fields and along the high river-bank.

It is a wonderful sight, and reminds one of



SUDANESE HUTS.

some beautiful picture of Eastern life, for high overhead the sky is aflame with the rosy radiance of the afterglow, and blue trails of smoke drift across the level green fields from the villages where fires have been kindled for the evening meal.

The long lines of home-going cattle are met by other processions, for this is the hour when the women come from their houses, and with great earthenware jars on their heads go down to the river to fetch water. Even tiny children help their mothers at this work, and we see them skillfully balancing the heavy water-pots on their heads, and, with skirts held high, wading into the brown shallows of the Nile.

As we go farther south we leave Egypt with its green fields and ancient temples behind us, and come to the Sudan, a great country which until 1898 was under the cruel rule of the Khalifa. In those days thousands of the natives were killed and their homes destroyed, but now new villages have sprung up, and there are mud-built towns stretching along the river bank.

Some of the Sudanese houses, especially those which belong to the richer natives, are quite imposing buildings, with windows, large courtyards and verandas. Farther south still, we reach the wild forest lands of Central Africa, and here, in the clearings, are beehive-shaped huts made of reeds and plaited palm-leaves.

CHAPTER XI

THE ARCTIC REGIONS

WE have seen many strange and interesting homes in all the great continents—in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia. Now we must leave the warm countries and the tropical forests behind us, and go northward up to the top of the world. There, in the lands of ice and snow, the region of midnight midsummer suns and dark winter days, we shall find dwelling-places and curious tribes of people that are well worth a visit.

We will go first to the north of Europe and see the Laplanders who live within the Arctic Circle, above Norway and Russia.

These Laplanders are quite unlike the people of other European countries, for they are short and dark, with broad, flat faces and narrow eyes. They live in small huts or in tents, and often move from place to place. Instead of horses and cattle,

large herds of tame reindeer are kept by the Lapps. They milk these animals, eat their flesh, use their skins for their clothes and for tent coverings, and also employ them to draw sledges across the frozen snow.



A LAPLAND HUT.

From Lapland we go to Greenland, and here we find the Esquimaux, who are not unlike the Lapps in their appearance, habits, and dress. In old times explorers travelling north in search of a new route to India looked upon the Esquimaux

104 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

as curiosities, and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth we hear of travellers bringing some of them home



LAPLAND TENTS.

from Greenland and exhibiting them to the London citizens.

In old eighteenth-century books we find descriptions of the Esquimaux and their homes,

and since then there have been few changes. We can see this if we read the accounts of Dr. Nansen's journey across Greenland about twenty years ago.



A STOREHOUSE, LAPLAND.

The people on the east coast live in huts made of earth and stone in the winter-time, and in the summer they have large tents. Several families share a tent, which is divided off by low partitions. The tent itself is made of skins, and at the doorway a skin curtain is hung to keep out the cold

wind. To Europeans the Esquimaux tents and huts seem to be terribly hot and ill-ventilated, for numbers of large oil-lamps are kept burning day and night, but the Greenlanders themselves are quite comfortable and contented in their stuffy, dirty dwellings.

The greater part of the floor in one of these Arctic homes is taken up by a platform spread with skins, on which the people sleep, and above hangs a wooden rack, on which wet clothes can be dried.

The oil-lamps are used as cooking-stoves, but a good deal of the food, chiefly meat and fish, is eaten raw.

On the Arctic coasts of America there are other tribes of Esquimaux, and many of these in the winter live in huts made of frozen snow. Snow houses! The words make one shiver, but in reality these strange homes are very snug and warm. They are easily built, too, and in a few hours a couple of men can make a hut that will last for months.

The Esquimaux first choose a suitable place for their winter camp, where there is some shelter

from the wind and where the snow is firm and hard. They then take out their knives, made of bone or iron, and cut the snow into hard, thick blocks. These are piled skilfully one on another until a dome-shaped hut is made. When it is



GREENLAND SNOW HUT.

finished a low doorway is cut in one side. A lamp is then lit in the interior of the hut, skins are spread out on the floor and hung over the door, and the winter quarters of the Esquimaux are complete.

108 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

In other districts the natives live in huts hollowed out of the ground and approached by nar-



ESQUIMAUX TENT.

row passages, for in that land of terrible winds and snowstorms ordinary houses and tents would be blown down and destroyed.

The Esquimaux are a very kindly, hospitable race, and they are always delighted to welcome strangers and greet them with broad smiles, which make even their plain faces—and some of them are very plain indeed—look pleasant and attractive.

The dresses of these people are made of skins, the women's costumes being very like those of the men. A large fur-lined hood is worn, and in this the Esquimaux mothers carry their babies.

In some parts of Labrador, however, there is an even stranger custom, for there the women put the babies inside their large boots, which have a flap in front for the purpose.

The Esquimaux are very kind to their children, but the little boys and girls are soon taught to work and make themselves useful. The boys learn how to fish, to hunt, and to drive the sledge-dogs, which in the Arctic regions are used instead of horses.

Little whips and sets of harness are given to the children, and with these they drive teams of savage, rough-haired puppies across the frozen snow.

In play-hours the boys amuse themselves with tobogganing, and as wood is very scarce large blocks of snow are used as sleds.

The little Esquimaux girls learn how to fish, to



A KORYAK HOUSE, SIBERIA.

prepare food, and to make clothes out of seal and otter skins.

In an Arctic camp or village there is usually a storehouse raised above the ground on high poles,

and here frozen meat and fish is kept out of the way of lynxes, wolverines, and other hungry wild animals.

The Esquimaux are very fond of singing and dancing, and they also love to listen to long stories, which they tell to each other as they sit in their warm huts during the long, dark winter days.

In far away Siberia the Koryaks build a peculiar house of wood, with a roof spread out like a mushroom. In winter, when the snow is very deep, and they cannot open the door, they enter their home through a hole in the roof.

CHAPTER XII

HOUSES IN TREES

A HOUSE in the tree-tops! The words remind us of "Peter Pan," and bring to us visions of Wendy and her brothers and of their delightful little fairylike home. It is not only in plays and story-books, however, that such dwellings are to be found, and if we travel into the out-of-the-way places of the world—into the East Indian Islands, for instance, or the tropical forests of Central Africa—we shall find real tree-top houses inhabited by real people.

Some of the 'African tree-homes look, from a distance, exactly like huge birds'-nests, and in Ysabel, one of the Solomon Islands, huts have been seen in trees that are more than a hundred and fifty feet high.

The reason why the natives of these places build themselves such curious dwellings is that they belong to wild and savage races who are often at



TREE HOUSES IN NEW GUINEA.

war among themselves. A family living in a tree-top house is more or less safe from the attacks of its neighbours, for the ladders, made of wood or twisted creepers, which they use to reach their



IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

homes, can be drawn up, and the hut secured against a sudden assault.

In other districts people raise their houses above the ground so that wild animals may not be able to

114 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

reach them, and when trees are not used, the huts are built on high posts.

Many of these houses, which seem to be stand-



HUT IN EAST CENTRAL AFRICA.

ing on several slender legs, are very curious-looking places, especially those in New Guinea. Here numbers of the natives, instead of living in villages,

often inhabit one huge hut, which is divided by partitions, each family having an apartment to itself. These houses, which are raised on posts and have high, thatched roofs, are sometimes as much as eight hundred feet in length.

The natives of New Guinea, or Papua, as it is sometimes called, are among the fiercest and most uncivilised races in the whole world. The children are neglected by their parents, there are no schools, and they are allowed to run wild in the woods and on the beach. Like children all the world over, however, these little savages have their own toys and amusements. Leapfrog is a favourite game, and they are fond, too, of playing at soldiers with toy spears and bows and arrows, of dressing themselves up and wearing masks made of leaves and grass, and of pretending to be pigs, kangaroos, and other wild animals.

The older girls and the women often perform strange dances, and very curious they look with their tattooed and painted faces, bushy hair, and short, stiff grass petticoats.

In some of the East Indian Islands and in the Malay Peninsula the huts are built on posts over

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the water of a river or on the seacoast, high poles being firmly planted in the mud or sand, and the house built on these. The natives learn to swim almost before they can walk, so there is little



HOUSE BUILT ON PILES, JAVA.

danger even when the babies fall out of their homes into deep water.

Not far from Papua is the Dutch colony of Java, and here, too, the houses are raised above the

ground on piles. The natives of Java are much more civilised than those of New Guinea, being,



IN HOLLAND.

indeed, more like the Siamese, and they look very picturesque in their bright-coloured dresses, with

flowers in their hair. These people are fond of an outdoor life, and can often be seen bathing and washing their clothes in the river, and even eating their meals and sleeping in the open air. The furniture of a Javanese house is very simple, and consists chiefly of a cooking-stove made of dried mud, and a few pots and dishes.

The people themselves are a merry, light-hearted race, fond of all sorts of gaiety, and delighting in bright colours, dancing, flowers, and sweet perfumes. They have many games and amusements, and in the monsoon season, when there are high winds, numbers of children, and grown-up people, too, may be seen flying kites. These kites are shaped like animals, birds, or dragons, and the wind makes a strange singing noise as it whistles through the strings to which they are attached.

From the warm countries of the South we must go northward now to America, and there also we find strange nestlike homes. These are the cliff houses of King Island, which is situated in the Behring Strait. Built on high poles and propped against the side of a steep cliff, they look very

much like swallows' nests under the eaves of an English cottage.

Sometimes these huts are raised more than twenty feet above the ground. They are made of walrus-skins stretched over a strong wooden



A TROPICAL BUNGALOW.

framework, and the interior is divided into living and sleeping rooms. There is a small hole which serves as a door, and sometimes small windows are to be seen, but these are not very necessary, because the walrus-hide of which the walls are

120 HOMES IN FOREIGN LANDS

made is oiled, and admits a good deal of light into the hut.

These quaint homes, which are kept very clean by their owners, are only used in summer-time, the natives moving away into less airy quarters at the approach of the Arctic winter.

We need not, however, go as far afield as Behring Strait or Java to find homes raised above the ground, for even at Marken, in Holland, they are to be seen. This village is situated on a narrow strip of land which is almost surrounded by the sea. There are often severe floods, and if the cottages, instead of being raised up on stiltlike posts, were built on the ground, they would soon be swamped and destroyed.

In many tropical colonies the bungalows are built on posts or concrete and brick columns, so that the woodwork shall be preserved from ants and other unpleasant crawling insects.

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